7: Furnivall G-4,5 (no date) 1948 AL1 Southeast Asia AL1

Another safeguard against corruption is the Regent. In Burma no one stays long enough in one place to ascertain in what quarters and to what extent corruption may prevail; still less is it possible to work up and carry through proceedings against those who are corrupt. In Java the Regent is permanent. His position and his high pay protect him against the temptation to accept petty bribes, and concern for his own authority and prestige makes him jealous of the influence of corrupt subordinates. These cannot practise corruption long or effectively without attracting the attention of the Regent, who can see that the offender is brought to account. If, then, the administration is so free from corruption as one is told, the credit is probably due in great part to the Regent.

Authority and Law. It must be admitted then that, in all those matters which stand out conspicuously as abuses under British rule in Burma, Dutch rule in Java presents a favourable contrast. Yet there is another side to the picture. The Government has employed 'gentle pressure' to protect the village community against dissolution, and to promote welfare; yet 'gentle pressure' may be debilitating rather than a stimulant, making the patient less able and not more able to stand alone. And it is difficult to reconcile gentle pressure, however well-intentioned, with the principles of liberty and law. In an address to a Dutch audience interested in colonial problems, the present writer endeavoured to illustrate this point.[1]

'One of your subordinate native officers described his work. "I improved sanitation. I got the people to found schools, and build bazaars, and provide a polyclinic. And I would not allow bamboo bazaars; if they could not afford wooden walls, I took care that the posts were of substantial timber and that the roof was sound. I even planted flower gardens, a thing that practically no one else has done; and it was all my own idea, without pressure from above." I have heard your European officers described as social engineers and your native civil servants as welfare officers, and the terms are justified. As I went round your villages and saw the infinite pains you take to conserve village society and build up social welfare, I found myself humming a tune. It was a hymn tune. Gradually the words came back to me: "Can a mother's tender care, Cease towards the child she bare? Yes, she may forgetful be, Yet will I remember thee." I thought of the hours and days we spend on the Bench, listening to advocates (trying to mislead us), laboriously taking down evidence (much of it false evidence), and sending poor unfortunates to jail, and I was filled with envy and admiration of your officers who have the privilege of giving

[1] Furnivall, *Asiatic Review*, 1935, pp. 655 ff.